



PRESS RELEASE

AG Frosh Opposes Atlantic Coast Drilling Plan
Attorney General calls on federal government to abandon proposal that places Chesapeake Bay and coastline at risk

Baltimore, MD (March 30, 2015) -Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced his strong opposition to drilling in the Atlantic Region's Outer Continental Shelf, and called on the federal government to halt the plan that would open coastal waters to oil and gas exploration.

In written comments submitted to the U.S. Department of the Interior, Frosh said that Maryland's natural resources would be degraded at every step in what he called an unnecessary and unwise process of exploring for oil and gas.

"The idea of allowing oil exploration along the Atlantic Coast is beyond foolish," Frosh said. "Half of the water in the Chesapeake Bay comes from the Atlantic Ocean. Beaches like the Assateague Island National Seashore are some of the most unspoiled in the nation. We would be jeopardizing the very assets we are working so hard to preserve."

Each phase of oil and gas exploration carries needless risks, Frosh said, from the testing and drilling needed to locate deposits, to the damage done during extraction and transport of the fuels, to the inevitable spills that occur.

Frosh's comments to the Interior Department noted that many segments of Maryland's economy would be placed at risk from the proposal - from the \$4 billion mid-Atlantic fisheries to the \$1 billion in tourism spending in Ocean City and Worcester County.

"There is just no way to eliminate the risks of spills and blowouts. The cumulative effect of small leaks can be as damaging as huge disasters such as the BP Deepwater Horizon blowout. Maryland's tourism economy, fishing economy and natural resources would all be at risk if this unnecessary plan moves forward."

The leasing plan was announced in January, as part of Washington's effort to set boundaries for federal oil development through 2022. The draft plan envisions an oil lease that would include rigs starting as close as 50 miles offshore along the coasts of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

"The BP Deepwater Horizon spill showed that disasters know no state boundaries," Frosh said. "Our nation has never allowed drilling in the Atlantic's Outer Continental Shelf for a good reason: it's a horrible idea. Let's not start now."

As the state's top law enforcement officer, Frosh noted that the Office of the Attorney General is responsible for enforcing the Maryland Coastal Zone Management Act, the Coastal Facilities Review Act, the state Critical Area law and other environmental laws which could be impacted by drilling operations offshore.

To read the full text of the Attorney General's submitted comments, [here](#).